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Michelle Harven: This is Force for Hire.

Desmon Farris: A deep dive into private military contracting and how it's transforming the battlefield.

Michelle Harven: I'm Michelle Harven.

Desmon Farris: I'm Desmon Farris. We've talked a bit about a population of contractors refer to as third country nationals or TCNs in past episodes. TCNs refer to those who are not working in their home country, nor are they working for a company that's headquartered in their home country. So essentially, this is a migrant workforce. It's hard not to talk about government contracting without mentioning them because they make up such a huge portion of the labor force.

Michelle Harven: During the first quarter of 2019, U.S. Central Command reported over 24,000 third country nationals supporting the Department of Defense. Well, around 21,700 contractors were US citizens. Third country nationals play a key role in conflicts across the globe. But while the industry increasingly relies on these workers, they're often kept in the shadows. They're subcontracted out to a convoluted degree and their seldom ever data or stats of the group made public. This lack of clarity means they're vulnerable to abuses.

Desmon Farris: Human trafficking remains a huge issue for these workers. In 2010, the Co-Chair for the Commission of Wartime Contracting, Christopher Shays said, the treatment of foreign workers is a human rights abuse that can not be tolerated. Just last year, the nonpartisan watchdog project on government oversight identified two companies sanctioned by the US government for human trafficking violations, and this is all just the tip of the iceberg.

Michelle Harven: For this episode, we want to talk all about one of the most impacted communities of government contracting, and the issues they face. For that, we turn first to James Sinclair, a lawyer and researcher in modern slavery and global labor exploitation. We started with the jobs third country nationals typically do.

James Sinclair: TCN has been increasingly used over the course of the last 25 years or so to undertake usually support service work in conflict and post conflict environments. So, these are people who had frequently doing the low skill jobs.

We are talking about people doing static guarding, cleaners, construction workers, etc. They're typically sourced from countries in the global south where wage rates tend to be significantly below that which you'd expect in Europe or the US.

Michelle Harven: Okay. So, this is generally low wage work, but they're performing essential tasks, is that right?

James Sinclair: Absolutely. It's been written several times by researchers that the contractors effectively, certainly the US military, and I think now it's an arguably the case of the UK and European military, simply couldn't do what they want to do in overseas. There's operation without the support of contractors and the contract rise work have big part of the contract rise workforce, our third country nationals who are there doing the day-to-day jobs, the things that need to be done, whether it's laundry and DFAC services or as site construction, security and all sorts of things.

Michelle Harven: So, how connected are third country national to say, American and U.K. Companies are basis?

James Sinclair: So, particularly the big defense contractors used TCNs all the time for these sorts of work that we're talking about because we have a competitive environment for contracting both in the UK context where I'm from, but also most particularly in the US. The big defense contractors, big security contractors are competing with each other principally on price but also on service delivery and so that significant components of that price will be the wages that are paid to the workers that you employed for the project at a significant number of those workers will be TCNs in the lower pay jobs. So, if you can get workers to work on your projects for a \$100 a month less than your competitors, then you obviously you can eke out a significant competitive advantage in that bidding environment.

Michelle Harven: What issues that our country nationals are running up against? What abuses are happening here?

James Sinclair: So, the worker will be bidding for paying for their job and that payment will vary depending on the type of project that we're talking about, the wage rates, etc, the risk profile of the job. But it's typically somewhere between about 2,000 U.S. Dollars and 6,000 US dollars. The worker themselves will not typically have the to pay that and so they will often be offered what we call a debt bond contract, which is why the phenomenon is known as debt bondage or bonded labor. They will be asked... Well, they will sign a contract where they will have to pay back the principal loan that they are receiving in order to pay them the bribe or the fee for their job plus interest, and that interest is somewhere usually between 35 and 50 percent per year.

James Sinclair: So, the worker then goes through a process of recruitment where they're having paid for their job, they are essentially guaranteed to get the job. They will then move through the usual paperwork and then we'll end up on the job sites in this context in Iraq or Afghanistan where they will then start their job and they will repay their loan over a period of anything between six months and 18 months or two years during which time the money that they're sending home to their family in remittance will be reduced obviously by the amount of the loan repayments. The fact that they are indebted to a money lender who will know where their family lives, and the work will be several thousand miles away from home, will have no support or network, these are people who are put in a very vulnerable position.

James Sinclair: One thing this worth noting is that it's really important not simply to view the workers in this context as being purely victims. The people with agency they're often making a very calculated judgment about the fact that this might be in their perception, the only way of accessing work, and therefore they know that they're being exploited in this sense, but they take the view that it's still worthwhile than doing the job, because they need to send remittance money back home to their families. This is a calculation that migrant work is all over the world like every day. It's a very complex situation to try to understand and then try to help in terms of legislation or other forms of rules.

Michelle Harven: Does paying these dues still makes taking these jobs worth it even though at the end they're ending up with debt?

James Sinclair: Well, this is the calculation that the recruiters make when they're setting the fee rates for the jobs that they are working out, and I should say that there is another element to this, which is that the corruption doesn't end with the recruitment. The recruiter will in many cases be offering bribes to various people up and down the supply chain. So, there may be local law enforcement who needs to be bribed, there may be people within the company that is ordering the workers. There's also demands or wants to be paid some of the money that is being generated by these fees and bearing in mind that the bonded labor, one slavery as a general operation, managers to generate about \$150 billion a year of illicit profits and bonded labor is the single biggest commercial element of that exploitation.

James Sinclair: So, we're talking about a lot of money here. But the fees themselves will be set usually with the ultimate job and the repayment or the remuneration for that job in mind and so the worker will be sitting and thinking, "Okay, well, this job is promising to pay me \$1,000 or \$800 a month, the work that I could access locally would pay me no more than say \$400 a month" and so the delta between those two plus the interest becomes... The delta between the two is weighed up against the debt bond plus the interest and so a calculation will be made.

Michelle Harven: A lot of these third country nationals are working on American bases, are working with American and UK service members or other contractors, why don't

the rules or codes that we have in place protect these workers or prevent this workforce from being taken advantage of?

James Sinclair: Well, there had been some very significant and encouraging improvements to the legal frameworks that surround these issues over the course of the last 10 or 15 years that the federal acquisition regulations have improved markedly. President Obama in 2013 made a very direct executive order about human trafficking of which bonded labor is part, and modern slavery, and that there are laws now that cover the movement of people with the intention of exploitation, which is essentially the definition of human trafficking. Those laws are increasingly being looked at by lawyers and investigators and others who are seeking to try to bring more accountability into this space, but not nothing yet really biting hard on what we know to be happening in the security space.

James Sinclair: Some of this is because it's quite difficult to gather evidence about this, not least because the workers themselves are very reluctant to talk about it. That reluctance comes from several things. They first of all, may not perceive that they are being exploited because the bonded labor paradigm is so endemic in the recruitment and management of migrant workers that they don't see it necessarily as being exploitation, is just the status quo as how things are. But even if they are that they're being exploited in a way that's contrary to the law, and let's be clear, the practice is contrary to the law in almost every country in the world. They may very well determine that it's not worth their time talking to lawyers or investigators about their case because it's unlikely to do them much good.

James Sinclair: If migrant workers on mass which seek to bring close actions or to the media, then it may have the effect of changing the culture. But unfortunately, when individual workers are faced with a choice of, do I speak up about what's happening to me or do I keep quiet? There is a loss of pressure on them to keep quiet, and that pressure comes from the fact that they might lose their job and be sent home with a debt they can't repay in essentially in shame and disgrace to the family. They might face physical threats of reprisal from the money lenders and the labor agents. They might get into trouble with their bosses, they might like their job, and they might not want to lose it. They might see this as a longer term opportunity. There's all sorts of push and pull factors, which means that gathering evidence in this space is not easy.

Michelle Harven: Let's talk about your personal experience. How did you get started looking at this migrant workforce in the defense industry?

James Sinclair: Well, I was just working as a job in lawyer back in 2005. I qualified as a lawyer in the U.K. In 2001, and now it's been a few years in private practice doing things entirely unrelated to the defense industry. Then I met and became friends with a gentleman called Tristan Forster. Tristan had been a Gurkha officer, a major in the Gurkha regiments of British army. He was then working for a company in Iraq looking after various VIPs and areas of critical national infrastructure for a

security company. I started talking about some of the practices that he was then seeing around the employment of migrant workers.

James Sinclair: This was something that was particularly dear to him because lots of the people that he was seeing coming into the theater then, were themselves, that Gurkhas and Tristan, well, he speaks fluent in Bali was able to speak to a lot of them about their experience and started to understand the full panoply of what we would now categorize as modern slavery, and came to me and said as a lawyer, what could we do about this? It was that moment that I looked around at the legal landscape and we realized that the law wasn't going to help us much.

James Sinclair: So, we decided that perhaps the most effective intervention that we could then make would be to set up an ethical recruitment company. In other words, a company that was specifically aimed at recruiting migrant workers in particularly ex-Gurkhas in a way that, you and I would like to be recruited, so not being charged for jobs, having complete transparency about the job they were going to, making sure they were well insured, they were well managed, that welfare was taken care of, etc.

James Sinclair: We did that because we felt that it was, I suppose morally the right thing to do, but also, frankly, we saw what we thought was a commercial opportunity because at that time there was almost no dedicated ethical recruiters in this space, and we felt that once this story became more widely known, U.S., U.K. Government agencies, private companies who were employing migrant workers would want to have an ethical and transparent and legally compliant way of recruiting their work forces.

James Sinclair: So, in 2006, we set up FSI Worldwide and FSI is still going strong today. It wasn't quite the beginning of the radical change we were hoping for. We would have thought by now the space would be teeming with ethical recruiters falling over themselves to offer better services, but it hasn't quite work like that. Unfortunately, it's still the case that most contractors are sourcing their workers from labor brokers who may very well be licensed in their country of origin, but who are often engaged in bonded and other forms of labor exploitation.

Michelle Harven: I remember when we were talking before, you mentioned when you first started out talking with these workers and when you said that there was not a fee that they would walk out, that it was so confusing or they just thought it wasn't legitimate.

James Sinclair: There is an almost tragic anticipation that exploitation inevitably will follow if people are looking for work overseas and therefore, yeah, we've had people breaking down in tears and always begging us to take money from them because the workers perceive that to be the only way of guaranteeing the job. When we try to explain, we're a fee free recruited, we are paid by the employer. We do not accept money from the employee, sometimes known as the employer payee's principal, they don't fully understand because particular in some of the countries, we work such as Nepal, the recruitment of overseas work

is so endemically infected with bonded labor that it's very hard to get people to understand that there is a different model and so sometimes workers assume that it's a trap or a trick or that we must have some other form of nefarious intent towards them.

James Sinclair: It takes quite a lot of explanation for us to be able to say, no, this is how we do it and we often conduct the interviews obviously with video cameras and we make sure that people had seen copies of their contract and signed copies of their contract before the recruitment. We're increasingly looking at things like smart contracts and other forms of technology that can try and cut out some of this corruption. But you're exactly right, unfortunately, one of the big issues is getting over the fact that people still see a payment as being a way of accessing a job for sure when if they don't pay, they don't being selected on merit is still quite an unusual thing for overseas work.

Michelle Harven: With FSI Worldwide, you mentioned that the companies are paying you then to recruit. With these other recruitment services, you mentioned that they may be getting paid in a different way, is there a loss of incentive than to be working in an ethical way?

James Sinclair: So, a few years ago now, so getting back about a decade or so, the rules changed, which meant that you could no longer essentially bid for us government contracts unless you can demonstrate that you had a reasonable budget, which was then I think about \$300 per man budgeted for recruitment of TCNs. So, it used to be before, you could essentially say... You can put a price in which included the fact that you are not paying for recruitment. If you weren't paying for it, then it was clearly a bonded labor situation. Nowadays, the budget that you submit or the bid that you submit should and must include a reasonable recruitment fee. Now, there was an investigation done a few years ago, which I'm sure you're aware of by Al Jazeera network called Americans' War Workers which highlighted various practices including the backhand charging these sorts of fees.

James Sinclair: So, a company might well budget that amount and theoretically pay it or offer to pay it to recruited but not in fact pay it and then the recruiter may very well return money to the contractor. There were instances of that that were shown in there in the Al Jazeera film. So, most of this stuff goes on off the books, in the margins, in the shadows. There will be very literally in the way of record keeping showing bribes paid of course of, that stuff it's never done in the open. In our experience as FSI, we put together what we thought was a very comprehensive, very cost effective recruitment and management program for TCNs and we found, for the first few years and in fact still now, there are relatively few takers for our services which leads you to ask why when there aren't that many competitors out there.

James Sinclair: If we were losing out to another ethical recruiter, well then, fair enough, perhaps we're not competitive enough or not innovative enough or something like that. But on the basis the FSI in a very, very small field and some people

would search field of one when it comes to offering properly compliant recruiting services in the global south, to US and UK defense contractors, the fact that the FSI receives so few orders from US and UK defense contractors suggests that the others are getting their workers in a different way, and the question needs to be asked exactly how they're doing it.

Desmon Farris: As James mentioned, this system is central to places like Nepal where many rely on these jobs. Nepal is so fundamental to the industry because of the history of Gurkhas fighters. The Gurkhas are known for their bravery and military prowess. Tens of thousands of Nepalese compete each year for a spot in the British army. This makes the Nepalese highly sought after in the defense world. We brought in Noah Coburn to talk more about the Nepalese and his research into the migrant workforce. He's an anthropologist, member of the faculty at Bennington College and author of *Under Contract: The Invisible Workers of America's Global War*. Noah traveled around the globe to learn more about the plight of these workers.

Noah Coburn: So, there's a whole range of people that fall into this category. The best known and the best visible are probably Nepali private security contractors who are oftentimes referred to as Gurkhas. This builds on a British practice of recruiting Nepalese into the British army, which continues to this day and has been happening for over two centuries and is one of the interesting ways that the American global wars right now really builds on British imperial practices. But that is the ideal job for a lot of these young South Asians. So, a lot of them will go trying to find work as a security guard, but they end up doing things like working as cooks, cleaners, other forms of laborers. But really, the amount of infrastructure that's built on the back of these workers is remarkable, and the war couldn't have happened without them.

Noah Coburn: So, I started off in Nepal and traveled all across the country visiting people who had worked in Afghanistan and then built contacts there and went on to India, to Turkey, to the Republic of Georgia, and then eventually to the UK to talk to contractors who had worked for a whole series of different companies at a series of different levels. But again, because a lot of these contracting companies don't necessarily want a lot of publicity about these workers, it's very difficult, there's no rules of them. The Department of Defense keeps some statistics around them, but most other US government agencies don't keep statistics around them. The statistics that you can find oftentimes very misleading, because again, the companies want to minimize the importance of these workers.

Michelle Harven: This is a significant place. When we were talking about this workforce, you mentioned Gurkhas, so people who are going into training to become a Gurkhas and they don't make it, these people often end up in this type of security work, is that right?

Noah Coburn: In this type of work or in worst types of work. Nepal is a country where 30 percent of their GDP is actually remittances. So, money sent back from workers

who are abroad. A lot of those workers are working in Gulf countries and construction and in labor like that, but there's also an understanding that the wages are higher wherever there's a war. So, a lot of these workers try to get jobs working at providing security at the US embassy in Kabul, for example, is protected by Nepalese. The Canadian embassy is protected by Nepalese. A lot of the bases in Afghanistan are protected by Nepalese, but those are really prime jobs.

Noah Coburn: The contractors who were working for the primary contractor often times treated much, much better than those who are a couple layers down. So for the young men who can't get that initial job, they're oftentimes promise these nice positions where they're going to get paid \$2,000 a month, and then they pay a broker to smuggle them into Afghanistan essentially. But then they end up at a contractor base, which looks like a military base out in the middle of Kandahar province, someplace, where they're working on a fuel dump or something like that.

Noah Coburn: What happens is when they arrive, they're told, oh no, we're not going to pay you \$2,000, we'll pay you \$500 or \$400 a month, and if you don't like it, there's the door. But of course, because it had been smuggled into the country, they don't have valid visas, they don't have work permits. They're nervous about the Afghan police arresting them and so essentially the contracting company can then take advantage of that situation and a lot of these young Nepalese end up working for months, if not years just to pay off the debt that they acquired, trying to get to the war zone in the first place. So, there's this real promise of high wages and riches, but oftentimes more often than not, they end up far short of those initial expectations.

Michelle Harven: You had mentioned before that when they do go overseas sometimes their passport gets taken away and they're stuck not being able to leave.

Noah Coburn: Absolutely. So, that's a really common practice. In fact, at the height of the war in Afghanistan it was made easier by the fact that there were a lot of contractor flights that were flying directly into Kandahar Air Field or in Bagram, so then the Nepalese even if they were allowed to keep their passport, either their passport was taken or if they were allowed to have it, they wouldn't have a visa with a stamp in it, which essentially meant as soon as they left the base, they could be arrested by the Afghan police. I talked to several Nepalese who had ended up just in such a situation. So, essentially, what happens is if your company is mistreating you or you something like that and you complain, they essentially say, fine leave and then you leave and you get arrested.

Noah Coburn: One of the things that I found, this facilitates a massive amount of corruption because essentially what you'll have is you'll have bosses higher up on the food chain who are taking kickbacks or working with corrupt Afghan officials and in the meantime all of the workers below them know that this is happening, and some of them want to report it, but they know that if they report it and they could end up in Afghan prison or end up being deported. So, the managers at



this level have an immense amount of power over these workers and take advantage of that.

Michelle Harven: You had described as labor camp in Kabul, can you talk about what you saw?

Noah Coburn: Sure. There's a whole... At the height of the war, you find these across the world in places that are either in conflict zones or adjacent to them. So, there are quite a few of these in Afghanistan, but there's also were a lot in Jordan. I hear there's some organize around the conflict in Yemen now as well. Essentially what it is, is it's just a compound where labor brokers will keep Nepalese who have either been smuggled into the country legally, illegally or brought in on short term visas that quickly expire and essentially these labor camps stuff the whole lot of mostly young Nepali men but you'll also have the Indians and Bangladeshis in there as well depending upon which of the human traffickers are running it. Then contracting companies will come by and say, listen, I need six people who have experience in private security, or I need six people that have experienced in construction and they'll get picked up and brought to work at a more legitimate camp.

Noah Coburn: But oftentimes in some cases, these are actually run by Afghan criminals and there's this Mafia network that connects them to traffickers in places like Delhi, and they can be really grim places for young Nepalese who particularly the ones with less experience who don't know what they're getting into. They find themselves quickly in debt. One of the young men I interviewed, had been detained and essentially kidnapped by one of these brokers for months, because and they have very little recourse and very difficult to escape once the brokers decide to hold you.

Michelle Harven: That's what I wanted to get into also how this work first becomes susceptible to human trafficking, which sounds like what you're describing.

Noah Coburn: Absolutely. So, oftentimes, the jobs that are promised are simply not there. So, on one level, the human trafficking initially is voluntary, where a broker will come to you and say, listen, I have this great job and so you go, but as you go, all of a sudden you realize that actually they're not taking you to Afghanistan legally and you don't have the correct paperwork and now you're staying in this base that has a large amount of criminal activity, and you've essentially been smuggled in.

Noah Coburn: So, it's a form of human trafficking where you initially agreed to it, but by the time you are two steps into it, you're increasingly vulnerable, especially if your passports taken and you are then all of a sudden have committed all these crimes, and the broker can always just walk away and leave you, so you then become dependent upon the broker to get you out of the country and to help you eventually pay off your debts.

Michelle Harven: We had talked about before these Nepalese who become mistreated, that information doesn't get back and there's a culture of shame?

Noah Coburn: On two levels that works. So, I spoke for example with a group of Nepalese who were on a DynCorp base that was attacked by the Taliban, and I interviewed 15 Nepalese who were there for that attack and three of whom were quite badly injured. All of them were sent back to Nepal almost immediately. So, on one level contract and companies work very hard to make sure that their workers don't speak to the press, they don't speak to researchers like myself and so they realize that sending them back to Nepal or wherever their home country is, makes it much less likely for them to talk to the press. At the same time, if you're a young Nepali man who has been taken advantage of by a broker or has been robbed or cheated, that's also a fairly shameful thing for you.

Noah Coburn: So, oftentimes, the workers who have bad experiences go home and don't say anything about it, whereas the young workers who go off and they do make a little money, they like to come home and boast about it and brag about it and inflate how much they actually made. So, a lot of the workers who go over come back and tell all these great stories about how terrific it was, and this encourages other workers to go and try to do the same thing that they did, but when you talk with them privately, you do a longer interview, you find out that perhaps their experiences wasn't as good as they had led their friends to believe.

Michelle Harven: I believe I read in your book that you also spoke to brokers, is that right?

Noah Coburn: I did, yes.

Michelle Harven: Did you get a take on what was their opinion of the system?

Noah Coburn: Well, the brokers are oftentimes similar to the companies. The people who work for companies that you've interviewed already, they really only prefer to see a small piece of the puzzle. So, if you get taken from your village in Nepal to Afghanistan to work, you don't deal with one broker, you might deal with six brokers because there's a broker who takes you from your village to Katmandu. There's a broker who takes you from Katmandu and passes you off to a broker in Delhi. Then there's a broker in Delhi who passes you off to a broker in Pablo. So, potentially, the abuse comes from this chain of brokers.

Noah Coburn: So each of these individuals goes home at night and says, well, I didn't do anything that bad. But by adding all those pieces together, there's a great deal of exploitation that's happening, but everybody sort of turns a blind eye to it and so while you have the American and international companies who have plausible deniability, when they say, well, we didn't do the exploitation directly, a lot of other people have similar plausible deniability, and there's really a need to step back and look at the whole picture and what the effects of this style of American war is doing to really understand the broader long-term impacts of it.

Michelle Harven: When you talked to some of these workers, what are the some of the stories or people who stood out for you?

Noah Coburn: A group of Nepalese I interviewed who were very well trained. They had fairly good experiences in Afghanistan. They made some money working primarily for DynCorp and they had fairly positive experiences. However, with the troop draw down, they lost their jobs, as is logical. One of the issues with being a contractor is once you're terminated that relationship and fully, there's no support for you afterwards. So, they went back to Nepal and they met with the broker who had sent them originally to Afghanistan and that broker said, well, I've got another job for you, this one is in Russia, and they thought that this was going to be very similar to their DynCorp experience. So, they agreed and they hopped on a plane and went to eastern Russia actually, and then ended up working as bodyguards for a Russian oligarch who is essentially a mafia boss.

Noah Coburn: When they arrived there, they realized they weren't given real visas. They were given a student visas and they were told to pretend to be students. When they walked into his compound, he just handed them a whole bunch of, and they demonstrated it, it was very funny pulling these guns out of a pillow case, we're unlicensed firearms. So, they were now essentially conducting illegal security operations to protect this oligarch who is involved in all these criminal activities, and they hadn't known that this is what they were getting into.

Noah Coburn: But you have now tens of thousands of Nepalese who worked for American contractors and Afghanistan who are now unemployed so they're looking for work, whether that's in Yemen, whether that's in the DRC or whether it's working for Russian oligarchs. So, there's a real way in which this American style of contracting has produced a huge labor force that is now going to be running around the globe and in many cases working against American interests and oftentimes and even worse conditions than they were when they were working for the Americans originally.

Michelle Harven: Yeah, that is such a crazy story. These workers have no idea if they're going to go to legitimate or illegitimate company like a job roulette.

Noah Coburn: Exactly. Just listening to some of their stories, I ended up talking mostly over Skype but with some of these Nepalese who I interviewed first in Nepal and then they ended up into Pakistan and they ended up in a CAR. There's a lot that are going into China now. One of the things I say in my book is at one point, you could go on the Alibaba website, which is the Amazon of China and you could literally order a unit of Nepali security guards online. I went through the process and even emailed the guy who was in charge of that. So, we're entering this world where the United States and a lot of ways has enabled this workforce to move around the globe and work in a whole series of conflicts that are going to be harder to monitor and understand the repercussions of.

Michelle Harven: Did you make any recommendations?

Noah Coburn: I did. I'm an anthropologist, so a lot of what I was trying to do was primarily describe the system and give people a better sense of what was happening. But I do think there needs to be a much more transparency and monitoring of these types of groups. Some of your previous episodes I've discussed some of the treaties that surround us, but again, those apply almost always only to the primary contractors. So, there's a real need to make sure that the primary contractors aren't just subcontracting out human rights abuses essentially. So, there's a need to really understand, first of all, what the United States is doing and enabling, and some of the congressional work last decade was an interesting start, but it really stopped.

Desmon Farris: Thanks to James Sinclair and Noah Coburn for taking the time to talk with us for this episode.

Michelle Harven: You don't want to miss our next episode. We hear from Tim Lynch, a retired Marine who spent over seven years in Afghanistan doing security and reconstruction projects while also running a bar and guest house called The Taj.

Tim Lynch,: On Thursday nights in Jalalabad, we're talking 2007, 2008, 2009, all the NGOs would come over to the bar and we'd have a happy hour and I'm talking 40, 50, 60 people from France, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, America, obviously sometimes in SF team would show up, sometimes Blackwater crew show up.

Desmon Farris: Don't forget to subscribe. While you're there, leave us a review. You can also let us know your thoughts at [podcast@stripes.com](mailto:podcast@stripes.com). Also follow us on Twitter for updates at [@starsandstripes](https://twitter.com/starsandstripes).

Michelle Harven: Force for Hire supervising editors are Bob Reid and Terry Leonard, Digital Team Lead and Editor is Michael Darnell.

Desmon Farris: Thanks for listening.

Outro: This is Force for Hire.